

Most disturbing, the study found that the number of students reporting gangs in their schools has nearly doubled. This is unacceptable. Gangs—and the guns, drugs, and violence that go with them—must be stopped from ever reaching the schoolhouse door.

Congress can help lead the way by passing the antigang and youth violence strategy that I sent to them more than a year ago. It is based on what we know works—tough, targeted deterrence and better antigang prevention. Through this approach, police and prosecutors in Boston literally disarmed the gangs and brought juvenile gun murders to a halt. We should not wait any longer to help other communities do the same.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 11, and it was embargoed for released until 6:30 p.m., April 12.

Remarks at the White House Easter Egg Roll

April 13, 1998

The President. Thank you. Good morning. Isn't it a wonderful morning? Let me say, I want to thank all the volunteers and all the sponsors who've made this wonderful day possible for thousands and thousands of young people.

I also want to say that the first official White House Egg Roll occurred here in 1878 when President Rutherford Hayes was living in the White House. Now, a lot of things have changed since then, but the most important thing today that you need to know is that for the very first time, hundreds of thousands of young people will be experiencing the White House Egg Roll through the Internet, thanks to Earthlinks, and I want to thank them for that.

I'd also like to thank a number of others, and especially Sun Microsystems, for all the work that's been done to try to open the White House to people around the world and especially around our country. But this day is special because of what Earthlinks has done to let lots and lots of young people who never could come to the White House be part of the Egg Roll.

So, are we ready to start the egg roll?

Hillary Clinton. Bernie's right here.

The President. Bernie, where's the whistle? This is the one thing every year I know, no matter what else happens, I will do right. [Laughter] Are you ready, kids? Are you ready?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I'm going to count to three and blow the whistle. One, two, three!

[At this point, the President blew the whistle to start the egg roll.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House volunteer Bernie Fairbanks.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Former Senator George J. Mitchell

April 13, 1998

Possible Visit to Ireland

Q. Mr. President, are you going to make a trip to Ireland?

The President. Well, if it would help, of course I would be willing to go, but I think it's important not to make that decision yet. I haven't had a chance to talk to the two Prime Ministers about it or the leaders of the main parties. If they think I should go—and they've got the biggest stake and the closest sense of the public—I would be happy to do it. But I have not decided to do it, and it's really completely up to them.

Q. Do you think that it might constitute sort of unwarranted interference in their affairs for you to go before the referendums?

The President. That's a decision I want them to make. That's why I said I don't think it's my place, really, to deal with this one way or the other. I'm not going to weigh in on it. I'm always willing to do whatever I can to help, but I don't want to do something that would undermine the chances of success. I want to do whatever I can to increase the chances that the parties themselves and the public now will make a decision.

U.S. Ambassador to Ireland

Q. Are you sending Riley to Ireland?